

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 5, 1898, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Twin Oaks, Sunday, June 5th, 1898. My dear Alec:

I cannot tell you how troubled I am by the letters received yesterday telling me that the trouble in your head continues. I do not feel so much worried about you at present or I would have taken the next train North, but about what is to happen if you come down into the heat. I wrote several letters to you last night and tore them up because they seemed so inadequate to express my trouble and my longing that you would not come down. I sent for Dr. Sowers and showed him your and Mr. McCurdy's letters and he says they but confirm his former diagnosis. He says that you are not in any danger so long as you remain where it is cool and when you are prudent and don't work too hard mentally, but that coming down not merely to the heat, but the hard work and excitement of the Convention is a very great risk and that you certainly ought not to attempt it. He says that if you will but be prudent and take a sufficient amount of gentle exercise you will get over the trouble and the sooner if you will but take that pill and be yourself again, able for years of good work for the deaf and humanity. Now my darling I know that you will not let anything cause you to swerve from the path of duty, but I cannot believe that it can be your duty to commit suicide, nor can I see how the cause of the deaf can be advanced by the death of the only man of very great importance and influence in their ranks. There are plenty of teachers but not one man of wealth and position whereby he can command the attention of the world to the work the teachers are doing. 2 Formerly there was Papa, now you are the only one. There is money back of almost every other field of work, yours is the only in back of the deaf. No greater loss to them could occur than to lose you. That you were lost in their service would not help. Gustavus Adolphus' death in the line of what he considered his duty caused the loss of the greater part of Germany to the Protestants, if he had lived it

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would have been theirs. The injury then done has never been repaired. Now you are in the same position.

I feel I am arguing almost uselessly, then is it nothing to you that you gave yourself to me years ago. You are mine. I hold you to your promise, you must not take that from me which is mine without my consent.

Mrs. Reamy wife of Commander Reamy was here last night. She said her husband was now commandant at the Portland Navy Yard and she was so glad that he was probably safely out of the war. I wondered if I would feel the same way. On the other hand while it was right that Mr. Hobson should go to almost certain death on the Merrimac it would not have been right for Admiral Sampson to have done so, as his life is more valuable and the whole conduct of the campaign devolves on him — So is it with you — You are leader of the forces of the Oralists and you can lead them from a distance. I thought of going right up to you dropping everything and yet as my work progresses I am filled with an ever greater sense of my obligations to my father and mother and I do not want to lose the only chance that ever will be mine to make the only return in my power that will seem at all adequate. Yet if you are ill I will come, that is first. But I fancy that generally you are well, it is only that when you walk too fast or it gets hot you feel at all uneasy. Dr. Sowers is exceedingly desirous that you should try the pill and I want you to. You have had a month now of trying your own way, now please try mine. Please do — If it will be a comfort to me do it. You may argue duty for coming here. There can certainly be no question of duty in refusing to take a pill. Dr. Sowers' argument is that while an active life will probably in time undo the bad effects of a too sedentary life still it has taken years of the latter to produce the condition you are in now and it must take a very long time for the active life to remove it and the pill by its mechanical action on the liver will hasten the natural slow progress. I take it, it is like this. Water will undoubtedly finally pass through a sieve that is clogged with refuse, but the process will be slow, perhaps so slow that it will create a new trouble in the sieve, rust — whereas if you stick a pin up one or two of the holes, the water will rush out, perhaps with such force as to carry along the refuse which blocked it. I cannot see

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why we are not justified in hastening the slow progress of Nature. Nature will finally resolve the dangerous products of typhoid fever into harmless gases, but not for a long time and meanwhile how much damage may they not have done. Man prevents this by burning the products, that is by hastening nature, why is it not our duty to do the same in case of bodily incapacity to throw off a disease. Life is too short to waste in waiting for nature if we can help it. You will get well all right if you go on being careful not working hard mentally and constantly exercising, but meantime you will be more or less ill and for a long time, if you take the pill you will reach your goal, good health, in half 4 the time and will not have lost all the time being miserable and not doing your work. It seems to me I am logical, now please take the pill anyway because it will relieve your wife.

If I hear that you are not well I will come up even if I have to turn around next day, but I will wait now and hear how you are if you do not improve I will come. I love you and I want you and I can't spare you and I am homesick for you, and I would not have staid all this time if I had not thought I ought to. I want to be where I can help the most.

Lovingly ever yours, What do I care whether you make a proper will or not — I don't want one I want you, if you really love me and think of me stay where you are and I will come to you.